

1846 W. H. Devotional. Eng.
Box IX, 97.E Box. 0155
A

THE COUNCIL, SUBSCRIBERS, FRIENDS, AND STUDENTS.

THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

LATE PRINCIPAL MASTER.

EXPOSITION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES

WHICH HAVE LED TO HIS RESIGNATION.

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

ABEL HEYWOOD, 58, OLDHAM STREET.

PRICE FOURPENCE.

MANCHESTER MILL PAPER

THE COUNCIL OF THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF DESIGN

THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF DESIGN

MANCHESTER • 1857

BY GEORGE WATKINS

BY GEORGE WATKINS

MANCHESTER

EXHIBITION OF THE MANCHESTER

MANCHESTER

LONDON

PRINTED BY J. COLEMAN, 11, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

MANCHESTER

ADAM HILLMAN, 22, OLDHAM STREET

1857

MANCHESTER

97. E Box. 0155

*W R Donall Esq^r
with Givballis's
respects.*

A

FAREWELL LETTER

TO THE

COUNCIL, SUBSCRIBERS, FRIENDS, AND STUDENTS,

OF THE

MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

BY GEORGE WALLIS,

LATE PRINCIPAL MASTER:

CONTAINING A FULL EXPOSITION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH
HAVE LED TO HIS RESIGNATION.

LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

MANCHESTER:

ABEL HEYWOOD, 58, OLDHAM STREET.

1846.

A FAREWELL LETTER, ETC.

*To the President, Vice Presidents, Council, Subscribers, Friends,
and Students of the Manchester School of Design.*

MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,

On resigning the Office of Principal Master of your School, I am desirous that you should be made fully acquainted with the circumstances which have compelled me to come to this decision, as from the uniform kindness and zealous support I have always received at your hands, and the high approbation that has been, from time to time, bestowed on my endeavours, I might be thought by some of you to have acted hastily, or that I had not shown that desire to meet the peculiar circumstances of the case, which you had, in return for your encouragement, a right to expect from me.

In entering on this painful but imperative duty, I trust you will believe that it is my earnest wish to avoid making any remark that may injure, or personally annoy any individual; should any statement in the course of this letter appear to warrant such conclusions, it must be attributed to the nature of the facts themselves, and not to any construction I may put upon them. It is the system pursued in the management of these Schools that I desire to expose, and not the individuals who are acting under it.

Previous to my taking office in your School, it had been in operation for some years; but from causes which need not be entered upon now, had not met with that success which had been anticipated for it, and your Council, a short time previous to my connexion with it, had sought the aid and patronage of the Government Council, at Somerset House, London; that body consented to give the Manchester School the required pecuniary assistance, on certain stipulated terms—one, and the main stipulation, being a total change in the system of instruction, the principles of which change were explained in a letter addressed to your Council, by J. G. Shaw Lefevre, Esq., dated March 8, 1843; the great feature of the previous plan of instruction, was teaching every student by and through the human figure, without regard to those

distinguishing principles in which Ornamental differs from Fine Art. In this letter it is stated,—

“ That the Council, (at Somerset House,) are desirous that the Committee, (at Manchester,) should look on the drawing of the human figure as a special acquisition, to be learnt after the pupil has undergone a preliminary course of ornamental drawing; which is not to be entered upon at all unless the future prospects of the student should render it desirable. To the arabesque painter, the designer for paper hangings, for iron, brass, and silver work, &c., the study of the figure is quite indispensable; but to the pattern draftsman for calico (and other such branches of manufacture), of no possible use, either in the way of teaching him principles of ornament, or adding to his stock of materials for use.”

On commencing my duties here I received a copy of printed instructions, signed by the present Director of the School, at Somerset House, C. H. Wilson, Esq., and which formed the basis of an introductory address to the students, written and delivered with his authority, in which the extent to, and the time at which the figure was to be taught was still more distinctly laid down. In this “ Plan of conducting the business of instruction in the Central School, at Somerset House, and the Branch Schools connected therewith*,” after detailing the elementary courses, it is stated,—

“ 7. Those students who require it will now commence drawing the figure. The classes for the figure to be divided into, first, an elementary class; and, secondly, an advanced class; and as this class is especially intended for persons to be employed in making ornamental designs, it is requisite that casts from objects, in which figures are *combined with ornament*, should be placed in the figure room, as well as casts from ancient statues. The practical application of all that is taught in these classes should be shown as much as possible, by examples on the walls, which should not present merely the appearance of a class room for the figure attached to an academy of fine arts. The tendency to become artists, so observable in classes where the figure is taught, is partly to be attributed to example; for this reason, no persons studying to become *artists*, as distinguished from *ornamentists*, will be admitted to the School of Design. This tendency is also to be attributed, in a great measure, to the fact that students, for the most part, have not sufficiently just ideas of the *importance* of the ornamental arts, and of the *improvement* of which they are susceptible. It is further to be observed, that for many—such as designers of patterns for silk, cotton, and woollen manufactures, paper hangings, (?) &c. the study of the figure is not required.”

Without implicitly agreeing with all the sentiments expressed in the documents referred to, I deemed them so far correct as to take them as general rules of action, considering myself fully at liberty to adopt my own methods of applying them. My individual opinion has always been opposed to the limitation of the study of the figure to any class of students, believing as I do, that in its proper place and judiciously applied, it becomes of the highest value to all; and I had hoped that

* See Third Report to the Board of Trade, presented to Parliament.

as the system of instruction, applicable to the wants of these institutions, had developed itself in a more mature form than had been done when those regulations were framed, that the utility of the figure, as a branch of education, would have been demonstrated and acknowledged, and with this view I had gone on; scrupulously adhering to the system of instruction, but imparting it in my own way; conceiving that no better ground-work could be laid for enabling the student to commence the practice of any department, than a rigid system of instruction in the ornamental, containing, as I consider it does, the very alphabet which all require to know before commencing any separate or peculiar branch of art.

Every thing had progressed satisfactorily on this plan up to August last year, when I received a communication addressed to me by the Director, stating that a change in the general arrangements and course of study was about to be adopted, and detailing the nature of that change, which consisted in alternating the studies of the pupils every *two hours* between the human figure and ornament:—that an architectural class was about to be established at Somerset House, but that such class would be *useless* in Manchester! and directing that the students in your school should be classified according to their studies.

This letter, dated 12th August, I placed in the hands of the Honorary Secretary, to lay before your Council, but owing to the vacation intervening, and my absence, this was not done until the end of September, six weeks after its receipt; during which time, its contents being known to several members, to whom it was submitted, there was ample time for consideration, previous to the monthly meeting of 25th September, at which the letter was read, and after some discussion, no official notice was taken of it, nor was I directed to make any reply.

Under these circumstances, I did not consider myself called upon to work out instructions which were calculated to produce so great a change in the system previously pursued, and which I felt *ought not* to be adopted without the consent of your Council. Conscious that though I was the engaged servant of the Somerset House Council, yet I was bound in honour to consult those parties here, by whose exertions the School was principally maintained, and who took so sincere an interest in every thing relating to its progress and welfare. Hence, in laying these instructions before your Council, I deemed it my duty to explain to them, in reference to the classifying of the students, that it had been done shortly after I commenced my duties, and acted upon up to that time; and, that with regard to the more important objects of these new arrangements, the study of the figure by the elementary classes, that I totally dissented from the plan proposed, wishing distinctly to impress upon them, that my objections were not to teaching the figure,

for at that time some of the senior students had commenced dividing their studies between ornament and the figure; which latter their previous practice enabled them to commence in what I conceive to be the only useful and efficient manner, by drawing from the skeleton direct, as the true basis of a sound knowledge of its parts; and that I further differed with the instructions contained in that letter, in reference to the utility of an architectural class in Manchester, knowing as I did, that it had been the wish of your Council to establish such a class, if time and other circumstances had permitted.

The school resumed its operations early in October, when I received another letter, dated 7th, in which the former letter is alluded to, the order for classification repeated; but the students are now to study the figure and ornament *two days* alternately, instead of *two hours*, and an *Architectural Class*, as also one for Perspective and Geometry was to be established. In reply to this I stated that the classification of the whole School, and the alternation of the studies of the senior students had been made some time previous to the receipt of the letter of 12th August; but that as regarded the alteration directed to be made in the Elementary Course, I deemed it of too much importance to act without the sanction of the Manchester Council, and should therefore lay the letter of the 7th October before it, as I had done that of 12th August. In reply to this communication, the Director stated that he was fully aware that I had classified the School, and that he expected the Council would see the propriety of the change indicated; referring me in case of difficulty to himself, or to the Inspector of Provincial Schools, who was about to pay his official visit.

It will be thus seen, that, upon receipt of the first letter, I expressed my objections to the proposed alterations, for the reasons afterwards given to the Council at Somerset House, in my letter of resignation; and, so far from any member of your Council appearing to differ with me in opinion, there was a marked unanimity as to the impolicy of any such change as that directed to be made, and expressions of satisfaction at the working and results of the plans hitherto pursued,—the basis of which I understood it would be my duty to work out when my appointment was made. With the experience I had gained, and the results produced by the plans which had been pursued, I believed myself justified in the course I adopted when the Inspector of Provincial Schools, Ambrose Poynter, Esq., paid his official visit in October, and we met in the presence of your Council to discuss the contents of the letters of 12th August and 7th October, to plainly and distinctly state to him the grounds of my objection to the alterations therein directed to be made. Your Council unanimously supported my position, whilst the Inspector expressed his satisfaction with the state of the School and its future prospects in the

highest possible terms, and agreed to the following minute of the proceedings being placed upon the books, a copy of which was furnished him as an answer to the letters of the Director, as he (the Inspector) was especially referred to in them, as a party to whom I could apply during his official visit, in case of difficulty; and it was certainly supposed by myself, and, I believe, by the whole of the members of your Council, that he came invested with sufficient authority to act in this case; and that the decision he came to, and the minute passed in his presence and with his approval, would have fully answered, not only the letters of the Director, but have conveyed the opinion of your Council in so plain a manner as to obviate the necessity for any further communication on that subject, either to the London Council or the Director.

MINUTE OF PROCEEDINGS OF SPECIAL MEETING,
HELD OCTOBER 15TH, 1845.

"Read, Letters from Mr. Wilson, in reference to the system of instruction wished to be introduced.

"Mr. Poynter expressed his satisfaction at the present state of the Schools, and his intention to report the same to the Council at Somerset House. Mr. Poynter also entered into an explanation of the wishes of the Council in reference to the system of instruction recommended by Mr. Wilson, and expressed his conviction that the Council at Somerset House would be satisfied to leave the manner and time of teaching the Figure to the discretion of this Council, understanding that it is their intention to make it a part of their system for every student hereafter to study the Figure in the regular course of their education."

The matter at issue seemed thus amicably disposed of; but, in order to prevent any misconception as to the plans in operation in the Manchester School, at the suggestion of some members of your Council, I addressed a letter to that body, explaining all which had been done, and indicating the course for the future. This letter your Council thought fit to publish, and, I presume, every subscriber has received a copy. In thus identifying itself with the sentiments contained therein, the Council voted me its thanks, and expressed satisfaction with the course hitherto pursued. Subjoined is a copy of the resolution I alluded to at the annual meeting, on the 24th February, as containing that vote of thanks, when, not in the least anticipating the possibility of such an occurrence, I felt suddenly indignant at the denial that your Council had ever sanctioned that letter, and was led abruptly to correct the worthy Chairman.

"MANCHESTER SCHOOL OF DESIGN."

"At a Meeting of the Council, held at the Royal Institution, on Tuesday, November 11, 1845, JAMES HEYWOOD, Esq., F.R.S., in the chair.

"The following Resolution was passed unanimously.

"That the best thanks of this Council be given to Mr. Wallis for his very able

Letter on the System of Instruction pursued in the School, and that the Honorary Secretary be requested to convey to Mr. Wallis the satisfaction of the Council with the course he has hitherto adopted.

(Signed)

"GEO. JACKSON,
"Honorary Secretary."

The "beginning of the end," however, approached. I received another letter from the Director, dated 5th November, containing an implied censure from the Council at Somerset House for not having replied to the former letters, which I considered had been fully answered in the conference with the Inspector, and the minute of proceedings before named. This letter further stated that it was my duty implicitly to obey the orders of the Director, and to do all I could to induce your Council to obey them also,—without any reference to the merits of the question at issue, except stating that, had I replied to the letter of 12th of August, the apparent misunderstanding would have been avoided.

Again I appealed to your Council, and again it justified me by directing the Honorary Secretary to write to the Director in the terms of the following resolution, passed at a meeting on the 11th November, —the same meeting at which I received the above vote of thanks, and official expression of approbation.

"That the Honorary Secretary be requested to write to Mr. Wilson, Director of the Government Schools, stating the course this Committee* have pursued in reference to the letters received by Mr. Wallis, the Principal Master, regarding the system of instruction to be adopted in the schools here.

"That this Committee regrets that the result of the deliberation on the first letter, dated 12th August, was not communicated to Mr. Wilson,—the letter of 7th October, with Mr. Wallis's reply, was read at a special meeting of the Committee, summoned to meet Ambrose Poynter, Esq., on his official visit to inspect the School; from the explanation that was then rendered to him, and the expression of his approval of the present state of the School, it was considered by this Committee that Mr. Poynter's report would have contained the necessary explanation and reply."

I was also requested to write in explanation, and I stated that as the non-communication of my views, with reference to the letter of 12th August, had been made a subject of complaint, I had, in order to prevent the possibility of misunderstanding in future, addressed the letter before referred to, to your Council, laying my views before them, and that as soon as I obtained a copy from the press I would forward it; when the Council at Somerset House, and the Director, would be able to judge how far those views were correct.

* To prevent ambiguity the Manchester Council is always termed a Committee in all official communications.

This printed letter, with an explanatory note, was sent on 20th November.

I am informed by your late Honorary Secretary, that not the slightest notice was taken of his official communication from your Council; but a letter dated 3rd December, was addressed to myself, and signed by the Director, the first paragraphs of which I insert.

"I have received your letters and printed statement, and am sorry to be under the necessity of again calling your attention to a circumstance of some importance, which seems to have escaped your notice, viz. That you, as well as all the masters in the Government Schools of Design, whether in the capital or in the provinces, are placed by the Council under the general superintendence and control of the Director, in every matter relating to the discharge of their duties as masters; and it is a necessary consequence of that regulation, that you should do your best in all cases to carry out the instructions which you receive from the Council, through me.

"I am happy to observe that, generally speaking, the course of study which you are endeavouring to carry out, is in harmony with your instructions.

"The particular and detailed method of study in Figure Drawing, which you lay down, is not in accordance with our views, and therefore does not meet with the approbation of the Council." *

The remainder of this letter is occupied with a repetition of the orders conveyed in the letters of 12th August and 7th October, as to the study of the Figure in the Elementary Classes, from examples promised to be sent, and concludes with some complimentary expressions as to my "zeal and devotion to my duties," and the satisfaction of the Council therewith.

Accordingly, a quantity of prints, very excellent in their way, of eyes, noses, mouths, hands, feet, heads, and full figures, were sent in a few days for the use of the Elementary Classes, alternately with the

* "The student having attained a knowledge of the use of his crayon, sets out with the bones as a foundation,—not, however, to draw the full skeleton, but portions of it. Thus, he studies the skull, the vertebræ of the neck, and the upper part of the trunk, as the clavicle, the sternum, the shoulder joint, upper ribs, and scapula, with the upper portion of the dorsal vertebræ,—the bones, in fact, which are found under the bust. His next study is the muscles connected with the same parts, by which he at once sees the connexion between the osseous and muscular formation. After this the full finished bust becomes his model. The result is inevitable, for, if he studies at all, he must understand it; and thus he goes on throughout the Figure,—trunk, arms, legs, hands, and feet,—until he studies the complete Figure from the antique statue. But, during this course, he is compelled to attend to other departments; thus he paints in the Morning School, and divides his time in the evening between the Figure and Ornamental Design. This course should, in the end, embrace the study of the living model, under stringent and well-digested regulations. The study of drapery, by means of the lay figure, being essential from its commencement, as showing the influence of internal construction on external form."—See *Letter on the System of Instruction*, page 14.

rudiments of ornament, and the elements of linear construction, as hitherto in use.

Finding that temporising was useless, and not thinking myself called upon to compromise my opinions, I stated to your Honorary Secretary my fixed determination to have a decisive answer from your Council as to the course I was to adopt; and, after considerable delay, at a meeting held on 12th January last, at which I repeated the grounds on which my objections to the proposed change were based, the following resolution was drawn up and agreed to, which I was requested to embody as a letter to the Director.

"That Mr. Wallis be requested to answer Mr. Wilson's letter of 3rd December, read this day before a special meeting of the Council, and to express the regret of the Manchester Council that accidental circumstances have delayed the reply to his important communication.

"That the Council in Manchester are desirous that the plans of the Government School of Design at Somerset House should be carried out in their general bearing to the fullest extent.

"That the Manchester Council have perceived with much pleasure that the preparatory course of drawing elementary forms meets with the approbation of Mr. Wilson, and that they will be happy subsequently to introduce lessons in figure drawing in outline, simultaneously with the course of ornamental art."

This, I considered my duty compelled me, though reluctantly, to write; and before consenting to do so, I earnestly and solemnly protested to your Council against the adoption of any such plans.

Having written the letter, as required, to the Director, I at once addressed the following communication to your Honorary Secretary.

7, Renshaw-street, Stretford New Road,
January 13th, 1846.

"My dear Sir,

"According to the direction of the Council, I have written to Mr. Wilson, Director of the Government Schools, in the exact terms contained in the resolution of yesterday, and enclose you a copy of my letter.

"Having thus far done my duty in this matter, I now beg to apprise the Council through you as the Honorary Secretary, that it is my intention to resign my appointment into the hands of the Council at Somerset House, as being their servant, and paid the official salary by them, I cannot continue to receive that salary, or hold an office, the duties of which, under existing circumstances, I cannot conscientiously undertake to fulfil, inasmuch as I feel that those duties would become exceedingly irksome from the unsatisfactory results which I believe will arise out of any alteration in the present mode of instruction pursued in the Manchester School of Design.

"This conviction I expressed yesterday to the Council, and should also have stated my intention to resign, if the proposed alterations were made, had I not feared to appear factious, or desirous of using an undue influence in the decision of the Council in this matter. That decision being now come to, and the expression of it conveyed to Mr. Wilson, through myself, I feel at liberty to act without the suspicion of improper motives, and I do so for my own character and interests,

being the individual who must eventually bear all the blame of any bad results which may arise out of the plans proposed to be adopted.

"I should have appended my resignation to the communication just made to Mr. Wilson, but I wished to act with all due courtesy and attention towards a body of gentlemen I shall ever respect, and whose kindness I wish most gratefully to acknowledge by every means short of a compromise of principle. I shall therefore wait until you have communicated with the Council before I give the required three months' notice of my retirement, to the Director at Somerset House.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours, very respectfully,

"GEORGE WALLIS."

"George Jackson, Esq.,
Honorary Secretary, Manchester School of Design, Royal Institution."

Pending the decision of your Council, the Director wrote me, dated 15th January, inquiring as to my resignation, of which he had been informed by some means unknown to me; but I declined replying officially until your Council had met.

Yet I have been charged with haste! A deliberation on so plain a question from 12th August, 1845, to 12th January, 1846, can scarcely be characterised as a hasty one! The true cause of my opposition too, has been misrepresented, and it has been stated that I am entirely opposed to the study of the human figure in Schools of Design. This is not the correct position of the question. My opposition to the proposed change was based on the conviction that it ought not to be taught *empirically*, and at a time when such teaching will do the student more harm than good; and further, that I consider the thorough education of the student from its anatomy, when his mind, hand, and eye, have been prepared by previous study to receive it, on a proper basis, is the only method by which a true and useful knowledge of the figure can be obtained. In order that my views on this point may be properly understood, subjoined is my letter of resignation to the Council at Somerset House, your Council having met and decided that it had no further power to act in the matter at issue.

"Manchester, January 24th, 1846,

"Government School of Design,

"Royal Institution.

"SIR,

"I now beg to answer your note of 15th officially, and to request that, at the next meeting of the Council, you will please to tender my resignation of the office to which the Council appointed me as Master of the Manchester School of Design, subject, of course, to three months' notice required by the Council.

"In thus resigning a situation which I have ever felt proud of, and in which I trust that two years' hard exertion on my part has not been altogether thrown away, I consider it due to the Council and to myself that I should give a brief explanation of my reasons for adopting so extreme, and, to all appearance, so sudden a course,—even if, in your note of 15th you had not requested such explanation.

"Upwards of four years' active experience in Schools of Design has fully convinced me that the course of instruction I have pursued during the last twelve months, with the full sanction of the Manchester Council, is one peculiarly adapted to the wants of this district, and that any alteration, however trivial it may at first sight appear, will be dangerous to that prosperity which is the distinguishing feature of the Manchester School: I prefer at once quitting an honourable, and, to me, pleasurable employment, to endangering the success of the Institution by experimenting on its present satisfactory position;—in short, I entirely dissent from the instructions lately received from yourself as the Director, for the introduction of the study of the Human Figure in the elementary classes, more especially from the engraved fragmentary examples sent for the use of this School, believing, as I do, that the true basis of the Figure is its anatomy, and that students taught to draw Ornament thoroughly, with a proper explanation of the principles of linear construction, are capable of at once commencing with the bones as the basis of their knowledge of the Figure, without the preliminary study from engravings or lithographs of hands, feet, and portions of the face; and that the distraction of the attention of the youthful student from Ornament to the Figure, from the Figure to Ornament, will have a serious effect on his progress and the proper understanding of the forms placed before him, besides assisting to increase that ignorant estimation of the Figure, or rather the power to make pretty drawings of it, which is found in the majority of youthful students on entering these Schools, and which has been one of the greatest difficulties I have had to contend with in Manchester, from the circumstances under which I assumed the mastership.

"Such are my reasons for taking this step, and I need not assure the Council that I do so with extreme regret, and that, in thus severing a connexion at once honourable, pleasing, and, in a measure, profitable also, I am actuated by motives which can only be appreciated when properly understood, but which I prefer others should interpret for me, being conscious of my own earnest desire to promote, by every means in my power, the important interests committed to my charge, but which, under existing circumstances, I can no longer do with present satisfaction to myself, or the ultimate realisation of those results which the Manchester Council and the public in general have now a full right to expect.

"I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

"GEO. WALLIS."

"C. H. Wilson, Esq.,

Director, School of Design,

Somerset House, London."

The above letter fully expresses my views, as also my reasons for adopting what I considered the only honourable course left for me to follow; and, in thus laying the matter fully before you, I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without questioning the propriety of the Committees of the Provincial Schools being required by the Council at Somerset House to adopt every change that takes place there; and still further when these changes are ordered to be made without any previous investigation by the London Council as to the state of the Schools, or whether any necessity exists in the Provincial Schools for any change at all. So far from any intention existing on the part of the Council at Somerset House to regard in any shape the necessity of, or prudence in ordering this change; the orders to make it were persevered in, in direct contradiction to the report of the official Inspector,

as will have been seen from the minute previously referred to, containing, as it did, the expression of his approbation of all he had seen as to the state of the School; and, throughout the whole correspondence, the orders conveyed to me were to be carried into effect, without my being required to seek either the consent or approval of your Council, and were persevered in, as much in defiance of its expressed opinions, as of the report Mr. Poynter pledged himself to make when on his visit of inspection.* In this instance the system ordered to be subverted had produced results which had been satisfactory to all who had seen them; whilst the plans ordered to be introduced, had not been in operation many months; in fact, the first orders to adopt them here, came before a full trial had been instituted in the London School.

When the Committee of the House of Commons on Arts and Manufactures, made its report in 1836, on the recommendation of which the Provincial Schools, as well as the Metropolitan, were founded; the question how far a Government Board should interfere in their management was distinctly defined, for the report states that—

“It is worthy of consideration whether, if satisfactory evidence were given that the local residents or municipalities would supply a certain portion of the expense, contributions, in aid only, might not be judiciously applied by Government. But the interposition of Government should not extend to interference; it should aim at the development and extension of art; but it should neither control its action, nor force its cultivation.”—page v.

It was upon this basis the Committee really intended the Provincial Schools, at least, to be conducted; as I have the authority of the chairman of that Committee, W. Ewart, Esq. M. P., for stating; the report having been drawn by him with especial care on this point.

How these intentions have been acted upon by the Council at Somerset House, will be seen from the following statement, to which I am the more anxious to direct your attention from the manner in which these, so called, Government Grants are generally spoken of, and the misconception which exists in the public mind respecting them

Your Council is called upon to raise at least a sum equal to the Government grant of £250 per annum—to place the whole system of instruction in the hands of the Council at Somerset House—to take any

* Mr. Poynter's official report, as printed by order of the Council at Somerset House, may possibly be referred to; but it must be distinctly understood, that this report is not published as presented by him, for it is modified considerably in expression, and altered to embrace the subject matter of the resolution passed in the Manchester Council on 12th January, 1846, whilst the report purports to be a statement of the position of the School in October, 1845, as seen by the Inspector.

officers they may appoint, having power only to complain of their inefficiency, and request their removal, but none to *retain services which may appear satisfactory*. In short, your Council has not the slightest control over any thing of primary importance in your School, and the funds placed in its hands, are only spent in working out the plans of the Somerset House Council, whose Inspector visits the School once a-year for a few hours. Last year, according to the Annual Report, the subscriptions amounted to £388; Students' Fees, £166; Fees from Private Classes, £111. Thus showing an annual income of £666 raised in Manchester, (besides casual donations, which amounted last year to £38,) which, with the government grant of £250, shows an income of £916, as the sum which in future is to be expended in working out the will and pleasure, and trying the *educational experiments* of the Council and Director at Somerset House, without regard to the opinion or wishes of your Council, or any consideration being given to the success which may have attended the previous method of instruction.

Such, then, is the true and undisguised position of every Provincial School. The duty of the masters being simply to follow every change ordered to be made at head-quarters—good, bad, or indifferent. To such a state of things I could not readily assent, and thought I had a right to exercise those powers of judgment which I had gained by experience here and elsewhere, the more especially as the orders now required to be obeyed, were in direct contradiction to the system I was engaged to work out in your School; deeming this a matter of vital importance, and conceiving it to be impossible to work with any efficiency under such change, it was necessary for my own honour, and the protection of that character, I flattered myself I had obtained amongst you, that I should resign my appointment as Principal Master of your School.

It may be further stated, that every thing which had been done in the Manchester School had been fully approved of by the Council in London, and that in the last Report to the Lords of the Privy Council for Trade, presented to Parliament it is stated that—

“The objects of the School being rightly understood and highly appreciated by the intelligent parties to whom its immediate management is committed, every exertion appears to be made to render its operations practically serviceable to the principal manufacturers of that important town.” * * * * “The Council, in reviewing the successful proceedings of this School throughout the last year, have reason to feel satisfied, and fully warranted in recommending to your Lordships a continuation of the annual aid towards its maintenance.”

Your School was fast becoming what it ought to become—the central point of Art-Education in this district. Its influence was daily extend-

ing, and it was about to work out the recommendation of the Committee on Arts and Manufactures—"develope and extend art, but neither control its action, nor force its cultivation." Witness the Exposition of Manufactures and its 45,000 visitors! and the frequent applications from various Educational Institutions for information and advice, always freely rendered; besides the number of students recommended to manufacturers, and the high opinion expressed by all those employers who had engaged youths educated in the School.

Your Council have, doubtlessly, been actuated by an earnest desire to promote the best interests of the institution under its charge, and in retaining the influence and pecuniary grant of the Council, together with the superintending care of the Director at Somerset House, it has perhaps acted wisely; though I am still at a loss to account for the course of conduct adopted in this matter towards myself, in having supported me in the views I took, up to the receipt of the letter of 3rd December, containing, though somewhat modified, a repetition of the implied censure, to which I could not succumb, and against which I had every reasonable ground for relying on your Council for protection—sent to me too, notwithstanding the perfect knowledge the Director had of the circumstances that had transpired here, and in defiance of the resolution of your Council, forwarded by the Honorary Secretary, stating that it had answered the former letters through the Inspector, and had arranged the future conduct of the School with him as the official representative of the Council at Somerset House. After these occurrences, so sudden a change as that which occurred in the determination of your Council, between the communication made officially on 11th November, in which it stood upon the arrangement with the Inspector, and its decision of 12th January, in which it completely nullifies the former resolutions, is very strange, to say the least of it, and can be solved on no other ground than that which has been the *official destruction* of others, as well as myself, who have been subject to the will and caprice of persons in authority, viz., that of committing the unpardonable crime of *doing too much*, and in a manner in which they had not succeeded. I feel persuaded that influences of an extraordinary character, must have been brought to bear on your Council, to have caused such changes in its determination, and that it must have been misled, by mistaking names in authority for practical experience and sound knowledge. I have, however, the satisfaction to know that those members who really understood the question, were fully satisfied that my views were correct, and would have supported me as they had previously done, but from an earnest wish to avoid discord.

To all the members of your Council individually I am deeply indebted for many acts of kindness,—for courtesy and consideration

which I shall ever acknowledge. To those among the subscribers with whom my duties have made me acquainted, I have to express a sense of their constant encouragement in my onward progress, and an appreciation of my labours which has ever been a stimulus to further exertion. To my students I would wish to express the high estimation in which I hold the talents of the whole of those whose progress has brought them more immediately under my own care, and my conviction that much of our success has been owing to the confidence they reposed in my advice, and the readiness with which they have ever worked out the instructions given. To those with whom my duties only brought me in occasional contact in the course of superintendence, my best thanks are due for their general good conduct and attention to their studies; and to the whole body my best wishes for their future welfare and progress, in return for their uniform good feeling towards me.

In conclusion, allow me to express my sincere wish that the object of this letter may not be mistaken, and, above all things, not misrepresented. I seek not for sympathy, because I need it not, being conscious of having done my duty to you and to myself; and as ill-used men usually meet more smooth tongues than helpful hands, I do not choose to class myself in such an unfortunate category; but I do appeal to you for a fair and honest judgment—for justice unbiased by authority—for security against misrepresentation and paltry chicanery.

I am your faithful servant,

GEO. WALLIS.

Manchester,
May 1st, 1846.

~~1602~~

134. A

